

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
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ACDA-07 NRC-05 OES-06 FEAE-00 ERDA-05 IGA-02  
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R 181604Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7463  
INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN  
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMCONSUL HAMBURG  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMCONSUL STUTTGART  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS  
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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, GW  
SUBJECT: CALL ON DGB PRESIDENT HEINZ OSKAR VETTER

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1. SUMMARY: DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON DGB (GERMAN  
TRADE UNION FEDERATION) PRESIDENT VETTER APRIL 13 IN  
DUSSELDORF, HE COMMENTED ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS IN-  
CLUDING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE AFL-CIO AND THE DGB, THE  
INTERAMERICAN LABOR SCENE, DGB-SOVIET AUCCTU RELATIONS,  
THE PRINCETON GERMAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE, THE BRAZIL-  
FRG ATOMIC ENERGY AGREEMENT, AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROB-

LEM IN THE FRG. VETTER WAS MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE LABOR SITUATION IN SPAIN THAN IN PORTUGAL AND FELT TIME WAS WORKING AGAINST THE GROWTH OF COMMUNIST PARTY INFLUENCE IN ITALY. VETTER ALSO INDICATED THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF ERNEST LEE, AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, RESULTED IN AN DGB-AFL-CIO AGREEMENT TO CONSULT AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON ASSISTANCE TO TRADE UNIONS IN SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ITALY AND OTHER AREAS. END SUMMARY.

2. VETTER GAVE THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF LABOR AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK.

-- SPAIN:

VETTER WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT LABOR DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN. HE SAID THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-ORIENTED UGT, WHICH HAD BEEN SUPPORTED IN EXILE BY THE ICFTU, REPRESENTED THE ONLY EFFECTIVE FORCE CAPABLE OF DEFEATING THE COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED WORKER COMMISSIONS. THE UGT MEMBERSHIP HAS GROWN RAPIDLY. ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKER COMMISSIONS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT CLANDESTINE ROLE AMONG SPANISH WORKERS DURING THE FRANCO REGIME, VETTER BELIEVES THEY ARE LOSING INFLUENCE AND NOW CLAIM MORE MEMBERSHIP THAN THEY ACTUALLY HAVE. VETTER INDICATED THAT HE AND A GROUP OF DGB LEADERS WILL MEET WITH KING JUAN CARLOS WHEN HE VISITS THE FRG.

-- PORTUGAL:

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VETTER SAID THE PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING A DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT IN PORTUGAL ARE MORE DIFFICULT THAN IN SPAIN SINCE THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS A WEAK LABOR FACTION AND HAS NOT DEVOTED SUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO BUILDING UP ITS STRENGTH AMONG THE PORTUGUESE WORKERS. THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTER, INTERSYNDICAL, WAS CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS AFTER THE REVOLUTION AND EFFORTS TO REMOVE THEM HAVE, SO FAR, BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY IS ALSO DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER A COMPETING NATIONAL LABOR CENTER SHOULD BE FORMED, SINCE IT MIGHT SPLIT THE LABOR MOVEMENT. VETTER COMMENTED THAT ONE OF THE FEW VIABLE ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVING THE LABOR SITUATION WOULD BE A LONG RANGE ATTEMPT TO TRAIN LABOR LEADERS IN EACH INDUSTRIAL SECTOR IN ORDER TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE DEMOCRATIC FACTION OF THE PORTUGUESE LABOR MOVEMENT. EVEN THIS TYPE OF EFFORT PROMISES TO BE DIFFICULT AND SLOW. NOW THE DGB IS ONLY SUPPORTING THE SOARES SOCIALIST PARTY LABOR FACTION.

-- ITALY:

VETTER SAID THAT THE RECENT CEREMONIES IN ROME ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF ROME REFLECTED THE SITUATION IN ITALY SINCE THERE WERE FEW AUTHENTIC POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ITALIAN WORKING PEOPLE AMONG THE GUESTS.

FOLLOWING HIS RECENT VISIT TO ITALY AND THE RETURN VISIT OF ITALIAN LABOR LEADERS TO THE FRG, VETTER SAID

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INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN  
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
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THAT HE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT TIME IS WORKING AGAINST  
THE INTERESTS OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. THE PCI  
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LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO REALIZE THESE TRENDS AND IS TRY-  
ING TO MANEUVER THE PARTY INTO THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE  
IT IS TOO LATE.

THE PCI, VETTER ADDED, APPEARS TO BE DIVIDED; IT HAS  
A FLEXIBLE AND PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP INCLUDING SUCH  
LEADERS AS BERLINGUER AND THE CGIL LABOR LEADER LAMA,  
BUT WITH A STRONG STALINIST FACTION AT THE MIDDLE  
LEVELS. DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF ITALIAN LABOR  
LEADERS TO THE DGB, THE COMMUNIST CGIL LEADER LAMA  
AGREED WITH VETTER IN A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT STEP-BY-  
STEP SOCIAL REFORM WAS THE BEST METHOD TO ACHIEVE  
SOCIAL CHANGE.

VETTER SAID THAT HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE COMMUNIST  
MAYORS WHO HAVE BEEN ELECTED IN ITALY ARE SLOWLY  
DRIFTING INTO CORRUPTION FOLLOWING THE SAME PATH OF  
THEIR PREDECESSORS. TIME SEEMS TO BE RUNNING OUT, IN  
TERMS OF THEIR GAINING POLITICAL ADVANTAGE.

VETTER ALSO CITED HIS EXPERIENCES IN DEVELOPING CO-  
OPERATION BETWEEN THE DGB-OWNED INSURANCE FIRM  
VOLKSFUERSORGE WITH A SIMILAR ITALIAN WORKER-ORIENTED  
INSURANCE INSTITUTION. WHEN THE COOPERATION STARTED,  
VETTER SAID, THIS INSURANCE COMPANY, WHICH IS LED BY  
COMMUNISTS, CONCENTRATED ON PROVIDING INSURANCE SER-  
VICES FOR PCI LABOR MEMBERS. IN DEVELOPING COOPERATION  
WITH VOLKSFUERSORGE, THE DGB SUCCESSFULLY DEMANDED THAT  
THE SERVICES OF ITS ITALIAN COUNTERPART INSURANCE FIRM  
BE OPENED TO LABOR MEMBERS OF OTHER POLITICAL FACTIONS.  
NEVERTHELESS, THE DGB'S PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA INDICA-  
TED TO HIM THAT THE STALINISTS ARE STILL STRONG IN  
MIDDLE LEVELS OF THE PCI.

UNFORTUNATELY, VETTER COMMENTED, THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST  
MOVEMENT IS WEAK BECAUSE IT IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTIES  
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ON THE ISSUE OF COOPERATING WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT. IF THESE TWO SOCIALIST FACTIONS COULD REUNITE, THEY COULD REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT AND POWERFUL ALTERNATIVE TO THE COMMUNISTS AMONG ITALIAN WORKERS. COMMENTING ON THE GENERAL SECRETARIES OF THE MAJOR PARTIES, VETTER SAID HE WAS UNIMPRESSED WITH MOST OF THEM, BUT THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY APPEARED TO BE THE MOST FORCEFUL AND STRONG LEADER.

3. TURNING TO SEVERAL OTHER TOPICS, VETTER PROVIDED HIS VIEWS ON:

-- AFL-CIO-DGB RELATIONS:

VETTER SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT, AFTER THE RECENT VISIT OF ERNEST LEE, DIRECTOR OF THE AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, A SMALL COMMITTEE COULD BE ESTABLISHED TO CONSULT AND COORDINATE ON ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE AFL-CIO'S NEW FREE LABOR INSTITUTE AND THE DGB (AND THE SPD'S FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION). VETTER SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE AFL-CIO WAS GIVING SOME SUPPORT TO THE SPANISH UGT AS WELL AS TO THE SPANISH CNT AND A BASQUE AFFILIATE OF THE ICFTU. VETTER AND KRISTOFFERSEN APPEARED HOPEFUL THAT THESE CONSULTATIONS WITH LEE WILL LEAD TO PRODUCTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE AFL-CIO AND THE DGB. THERE MAY BE SOME DIFFERENCES IN TACTICS, WITH THE DGB NOT WISHING TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND INSTEAD SUPPORTING ONE FACTION THAT THEY CAN TRUST (E.G. THE UGT). VETTER AND KRISTOFFERSEN APPEARED IN AGREEMENT WITH LEE ON TACTICS ON THE RELATIONS WITH TRADE UNIONS IN ITALY.

VETTER ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE DGB IS BASICALLY ANTI-COMMUNIST BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE, BUT NEEDS TO HAVE ROOM FOR TACTICAL MANEUVER IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EUROPEAN SITUATION.

THE DGB SEES FEW ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVES TO THE SOLUTIONS AND SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN BUILT UP IN THE FRG OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS - EVEN IN THE US WITH ITS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. AT FIRST, IN EUROPEAN TRADE UNION RELATIONS, OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS FELT THAT DGB SOLUTIONS SUCH AS CODETERMINATION WERE NOT IN THE WORKING CLASS'S INTEREST, BUT THESE ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME WITH GROWING INTEREST IN CODETERMINA-

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TION AND IN EVEN MORE RADICAL SOLUTIONS PROPOSED IN  
SCANDINAVIA, ITALY, FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN.  
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VETTER ALSO MADE A POINT OF MENTIONING TO ME THAT THE DGB WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT THAT THE UNIFIED TRADE UNION MOVEMENT RECEIVED FROM THE US GOVERNMENT AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD.

-- SOUTH AMERICA:

VETTER SAID THAT THE DGB WAS CONCERNED ABOUT LATIN AMERICA AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CLAT, THE LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE WFL. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE RELATIONS PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE LATIN AMERICAN AND NORTH AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS, THE LATIN AMERICANS INDICATED TO HIM THEY STILL FAVOR INTER-AMERICAN COOPERATION BECAUSE OF THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN THE US AND SOUTH AMERICA. HOWEVER, HE SAID, THAT THE US IMAGE NEEDS REFURBISHING BY AN INITIATIVE LIKE THE ALLIANCE OF PROGRESS DURING THE KENNEDY YEARS.

-- DGB RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET AUCCTU:

VETTER SAID THAT, CONTRARY TO WHAT MANY US LABOR LEADERS BELIEVE, HE HAS ONLY BEEN IN THE SOVIET UNION THREE TIMES, AND THE LAST TIME IN 1973. JUDGING FROM RECENT PICTURES, BREZHNEV APPEARS TO BE IN POOR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND LOOKS LIKE POMPIDOU BEFORE HE DIED WITH A FACE PUFFED FROM CORTISONE TREATMENTS. LEADERSHIP CHANGES ARE COMING, BUT NOBODY HAS INDICATIONS YET OF WHO THE NEW LEADERS WILL BE. COMMENTING ON HIS CONTACTS WITH SHELEPIN, THE FORMER AUCCTU LEADER, VETTER SAID SHELEPIN WAS NOT A TRADE UNIONIST, BUT AN INTELLIGENT AND CLEVER PERSONALITY, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NOT CLEVER ENOUGH TO SURVIVE.

-- ON THE PRINCETON CONFERENCE:

VETTER SAID THAT THERE WAS A VERY FRANK DISCUSSION, PARTICULARLY ON THE ENERGY AND NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT THAT THE EAST-WEST DISCUSSION WAS FAIRLY STERILE WITH LITTLE NEW GROUND BEING BROKEN. VETTER SAID HE MADE NO COMMENTS, BUT AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE ERNEST LEE DID MAKE A SHORT STATEMENT ON THE EAST-WEST RELATIONS PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT SINCE THE CONFERENCE HE HAD RECEIVED A COPY OF THE FORD FOUNDATION STUDY ON ENERGY PROBLEMS AND HE FELT THIS WOULD CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE ENERGY PROBLEM. ON NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES, VETTER INDICATED CONSOLIDATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE EC HAD

PRIORITY BEFORE EFFECTIVE ACTION COULD BE TAKEN ON  
NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES.

-- THE FRG-BRAZIL NUCLEAR POWER AGREEMENT:  
VETTER SAID THAT HE WAS HAPPY AS A TRADE UNIONIST TO  
HEAR ON TV THAT THERE HAD BEEN SECRET CONSULTATIONS  
BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE US ON THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFE-  
RATION ISSUE, BECAUSE HE FELT THIS ISSUE SHOULD NOT  
BE PERMITTED TO AFFECT US-FRG RELATIONS AND DOMESTICAL-  
LY TO GIVE THE LEFT EXTREMISTS (CHAOTEN) A PLATFORM  
TO ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS THE US'S STRONGEST  
ALLY IN EUROPE. "THE GENIE IS ALREADY OUT OF THE  
BOTTLE, WITH BOMBS EXISTING IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE  
WORLD", VETTER SAID WRYLY.

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I NOTED THAT WE HAVE SOME PRACTICAL IDEAS ON REDUCING  
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THE DANGER, AND THAT WE ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO CONSULT-  
ING WITH THE FRG AND OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES ABOUT  
THEM.

VETTER THEN SAID HALF-JOKINGLY: "MAYBE THE SOLUTION IS  
TO TRADE TANKS FOR NON-PROLIFERATION WITH BOTH SIDES  
MAKING CONCESSIONS ON THE INDUSTRIAL INTEREST IN-  
VOLVED." VETTER DID NOT MAKE A POINT OF JOBS BEING  
A FACTOR IN THE BRAZIL-FRG AGREEMENT.

-- THE BUNDESWEHR COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE:  
WHEN I OBSERVED THAT THE PRESS HAD REPORTED THAT VETTER  
WOULD JOIN NATO SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS AND OTHER PRO-  
MINENT SPEAKERS, INCLUDING DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER, AS  
ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS AT THE ANNUAL BUNDES-  
WEHR COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE, VETTER CONFIRMED THAT HE  
WOULD BE PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM AND ADDED WITH  
A SMILE: "YOU SHOULD HAVE GEORGE MEANY TALKING TO THE  
GENERALS TOO."

-- ON UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE FRG:  
VETTER SAID THAT UNEMPLOYMENT WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM  
BECAUSE THE PRESENT RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH DID NOT  
APPEAR SUFFICIENT TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT AND THAT  
INVESTMENT HAD GONE MORE INTO RATIONALIZATION THAN  
INTO JOB CREATION. FOR THIS REASON, THE DGB WAS AD-  
VOCATING THE REDUCTION OF WORKING TIME AS A SOLUTION  
TO STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS, FOLLOWING PRECEDENTS IN SOME  
INDUSTRIES IN THE US, TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT. RESOLV-  
ING THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM IS A VERY SERIOUS ISSUE,  
HE SAID, WHICH ALSO AFFECTS DGB PRESTIGE AND LEADER-  
SHIP CAPABILITIES ON THE EUROPEAN LEVEL.  
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